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## THE CHRISTIAN'S CLOSET.

HARRIET MCEWAN KIMBALL.

I need not leave the jostling world,  
Or wait till daily tasks are o'er,  
To fold my hands in secret prayer  
Within the close-shut closet door.

There is a viewless cloistered room  
As high as heaven, as fair as day;  
Where, though my feet may join the throng,  
My soul can enter in and pray.

And never through those crystal walls  
The clash of life can pierce its way;  
Nor ever can a human ear  
Drink in the secret words I say.

One hearkening even cannot know  
When I have crossed the threshold o'er;  
For He alone who hears my prayer,  
Has heard the shutting of the door.

Portsmouth, N. H.

## SWITZERLAND, THE WORLD'S ARBITER.

A gentleman, a native of Switzerland, temporarily in America, makes some suggestions in the following letter which our readers will be glad to read.

REV. R. B. HOWARD, Secretary of the American Peace Society, Boston:

*Dear Sir*—The time will come, I have no doubt, when the "Peace Society" will have to extend its work and take an initiative in a greater number of questions than it has done until now. It will have to take hold of every great social, moral and economical problem which may forward the peace and union among nations and men. Wherever possible, the settlement by arbitration will have to be insisted upon by the "Peace Society," whose duty it will be to take up every question which may disturb the peace of nations, to exercise and study it, and to bring the result of its investigations before the Swiss government at Berne, seat of all International Unions, inviting it to propose to the other governments that a diplomatic conference should be held to discuss the question at issue. Should the governments refuse to respond to this invitation, the "Peace Society" could still make a last effort in favor of an arbitration, in making known through the everywhere present press, the result of its investigations to the civilized world, *the court of last appeal*.

Such a mode of working would perhaps be worthy of being considered by the "American Peace Society." I have no doubt that the Swiss government would always be ready to give its most cordial support to any proposition for arbitration. The following passage by a late English minister plenipotentiary at Berne, gives us full assurance thereof.

Sir Francis Ottewell Adams in his remarkable work on "The Swiss Confederation," published a short time ago, says in his chapter on "International Unions":

"The establishment of various international unions, having their seat at Berne, on the soil of neutral Switzerland, is a matter which well deserves the consideration of thoughtful men, as tending to bind nations closer together, and thus working in the direction of peace. The fact, too, that Switzerland has been chosen as the home of these unions is one which will gradually give to her a peculiar position of honor and usefulness in the world."

"A report upon this subject by Mr. Conway Thornton

will be found in one of the Blue Books presented to Parliament in 1885, and is well worth perusal.

"In 1863, as is well known, a private committee, the members of which belonged to different nationalities, assembled at Geneva, and drew up a plan for the protection of the wounded in battle. They then requested the Federal Council, as the central government of the country in which they had held their sittings, to propose to the other governments that a diplomatic conference should be held in Switzerland in order to discuss this humane and important question. The Federal Council accepted the task, and the consequence was that delegates from many powers were sent to Geneva where the memorable Convention of the 22nd of August, 1864, was signed.

"This Convention may fairly be looked upon as the origin of the selection of Switzerland by the powers for the natural seat of various *international unions* which have since been founded."

Mr. Thornton concludes his report with the following observations:

"It is difficult, when passing through the quiet streets of Berne, to realize the importance of the operations which are being unobtrusively carried on, or the worldwide scope of the interests involved. Yet it cannot be doubted that these interests form a more effectual guarantee for the preservation of Switzerland as an independent State than any other that could be devised. This position she has gained by the study of the conveniences of mankind, or, in other words, by making herself useful to every one, while offending none. It may even be hoped that this spirit may in time *extend itself to other nations* with beneficial results to humanity at large. The confidence reposed by other countries in Switzerland, in the formation of these unions, tends to create a more unrestrained intercourse between them in matters of daily life, which can hardly fail to be productive of a progressively improving understanding among them all."

C. A. N.

## LETTER FROM NEW YORK.

*The Era of International Congresses.—Rivalry of England and America on the High Seas.—Something not shown the Pan-Americans.—The Sabbath and the Exposition of 1892.*

NEW YORK, Jan., 1890.

*Mr. Editor*—The Marine Congress has adjourned, and while its outcome shows no great advance in the science of safe seamanship, it did some useful work in harmonizing signals at sea, and in suggesting other rules to guide navigators of different nations. As an exhibition of international courtesy throughout its sessions, it did good. No sharper jealousies have been incurred than those between rival owners and officers of vessels, and the mutual kindness exhibited in the discussions was remarkable, especially as the older maritime men in our country once accustomed to dispute the commerce of the seas with Great Britain, are restive under her present supremacy. Like the Anti-Slavery Congress at Brussels, the Marine Congress marks an advance in international comity.

The Conference of American nations has created a greater sensation. It has been lionized, feted and generally "shown about" our country, chiefly because shrewd traders thought they saw an opportunity to increase